

48

A N  
H E R O I C E P I S T L E  
T O

SIR WILLIAM CHAMBERS, Knight,  
COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF HIS MAJESTY'S WORKS,

And Author of a late Dissertation on

O R I E N T A L G A R D E N I N G .

Enriched with explanatory Notes, chiefly extracted from that elaborate  
Performance.

Non omnes arbuta juvant, humilesque myricæ. VIRGIL.

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. ALMON, opposite BURLINGTON-HOUSE, in PICCADILLY.

[Price one Shilling ~~one Shilling~~]

MDCCLXXIII.



1871



## P R E F A C E.

**T**HIS Poem was written last summer, immediately after the publication of Sir William Chambers's Dissertation; but the bookseller, to whom it was offered, declined publishing it, till the town was full. His reason for this is obvious; yet it would hardly have weigh'd with the author, had he not thought, that his hero's fame would increase in proportion to his publisher's profit. However he foresaw, that, by this delay, one inconvenience might arise, which this preface is written to remove. Readers of the present generation are so very inattentive to what they read, that it is probable, one half of Sir William's may have forgotten the principles which his book inculcates. Let these, then, be reminded, that it is the author's profest aim in extolling the taste of the Chinese, to condemn

B

that



that mean and paltry manner which Kent introduced, which Southcote, Hamilton, and Brown followed, and which, to our national disgrace, is called the English style of gardening. He shews the poverty of this taste, by aptly comparing it to a dinner, which consisted of three gross pieces, three times repeated; and proves to a demonstration, that Nature herself is incapable of pleasing, without the assistance of Art, and that too of the most luxuriant kind. In short, such art as is displayed in the Emperor's garden of Yven-Ming-Yven, near Pekin; where fine lizards, and fine women, human giants, and giant baboons, make but a small part of the superb scenery. He teaches us, that a perfect garden must contain within itself all the amusements of a great city; that *Urbs in rure*, not *Rus in urbe*, is the thing, which an improver of true taste ought to aim at. He says ---but it is impossible to abridge all that he says:---Let this therefore suffice, to tempt the reader again to peruse his invaluable Dissertation, since without it, he will never relish half the beauties of the following epistle; for (if her Majesty's Zebra, and the powder-mills at Hounslow be excepted



cepted) there is scarce a single image in it, which is not taken from that work.

But though the images be borrowed, the author claims some small merit from his application of them. Sir William says too modestly, "that European artists must not hope to rival Oriental splendor." The poet shews, that European artists may easily rival it; and, that Richmond gardens, with only the addition of a new bridge to join them to Brentford, may be new modelled, perfectly *à la Chinois*. He exhorts his Knight to undertake the glorious task, and leaves no cause to doubt, but that, under the auspicious patronage he now so justly enjoys, added to the *ready* vote of those, who furnish ways and means, the royal work will speedily be compleated.

*Knightbridge, Jan. 20th, 1773.*







---

---

# AN HEROIC EPISTLE

T O

SIR WILLIAM CHAMBERS, Knight, &c. &c.

---

**K** NIGHT of the Polar Star! by Fortune plac'd,  
To shine the Cynosure of British taste;

Whose orb collects, in one refulgent view,

The scatter'd glories of Chinese Virtù;

C

And

N O T E.

Verse 2. [Cynosure of British taste]. Cynosure, an affected phrase, Cynofura is the constellation of Ursa Minor, or the Lesser Bear, the next star to the Pole. Dr. Newton, on the word in Milton.



And spread their lustre in so broad a blaze, 5  
 That Kings themselves are dazzled, while they gaze.  
 O let the Muse attend thy march sublime,  
 And, with thy prose, caparison her rhyme;  
 Teach her, like thee, to gild her splendid song,  
 With scenes of Yven-Ming, and sayings of Li-Tsong; 10  
 Like thee to scorn Dame Nature's simple fence;  
 Leap each Ha Ha of truth and common sense;  
 And proudly rising in her bold career,  
 Demand attention from the gracious ear  
 Of Him, whom we and all the world admit, 15  
 Patron supreme of science, taste, and wit.

Does

## N O T E.

Verse 10. [With scenes of Yven-Ming.] One of the Imperial gardens at Pekin. [Sayings of Li-Tsong.] "Many trees, shrubs, and flowers," sayeth Li-Tsong, a Chinese author of great antiquity, "thrive best in low, moist situations; many on hills and mountains; some require a rich soil; but others will grow on clay, in sand, or even upon rocks, and in the water: to some a sunny exposition is necessary; but for others the shade is preferable. There are plants which thrive best in exposed situations, but in general, shelter is requisite. The skilful gardener, to whom study and experience have taught these qualities, carefully attends to them in his operations; knowing that thereon depend the health and growth of his plants; and consequently the beauty of his plantations." Vide Diss. p. 77. The reader, I presume, will readily allow, that he never met with much recondite truth, as this ancient Chinese here exhibits.



Does Envy doubt? Witness ye chosen train!

Who breathe the sweets of his Saturnian reign;

Witness ye H\*lls, ye J\*ns\*ns, Sc\*ts, S\*bb\*s,

Hark to my call, for some of you have ears. 20

Let D\*\*d H\*e, from the remotest North,

In fee-saw sceptic scruples hint his worth;

D\*\*d, who there supinely deigns to lye

The fattest Hog of Epicurus' sty;

Tho' drunk with Gallic wine, and Gallic praise, 25

D\*\*d shall bless Old England's halcyon days;

The mighty Home bemir'd in prose so long,

Again shall stalk upon the stilts of song;

While bold Mac-Ossian, wont in Ghosts to deal,

Bids candid Smollet from his coffin steal; 30

Bids Mallock quit his sweet Elysian rest,

Sunk in his St. John's philosophic breast,

And,

# N O T E.

Verse 34. [Truth at Court.] Vide (if it be extant) a poem under this title, for which (or for the publication of Lord Bolingbroke's philosophical writings) the person here mentioned, received a considerable pension in the time of Lord B—te's administration.



And, like old Orpheus, make some strong effort  
To come from Hell, and warble *truth at Court*.

There was a time, “ in Escher’s peaceful grove, 35  
“ When Kent and Nature vy’d for Pelham’s love,  
That Pope beheld them with auspicious smile,  
And own’d that Beauty blest their mutual toil.  
Mistaken Bard ! could such a pair design  
Scenes fit to live in thy immortal line ? 40  
Hadst thou been born in this enlighten’d day,  
Felt, as we feel, Taste’s oriental ray,  
Thy satire sure had given them both a stab,  
Called Kent a Driveller, and the Nymph a Drab.  
For what is Nature ? Ring her changes round, 45  
Her three flat notes are water, plants, and ground ;

Pro-

## N O T E.

Verse 45. [For what is Nature ?] This is the great and fundamental axiom, on which oriental taste is founded. It is therefore expressed here with the greatest precision, and in the identical phrase of the great original. The figurative terms, and even the explanatory simile are entirely borrowed from Sir William’s Dissertation. “ *Nature* (says the Chinese, or Sir William for them) affords us but few materials to work with. *Plants*, *ground*, and *water*, are her only productions ; and, though both the forms and arrangements



( III )

Prolong the peal, yet spite of all your clatter,  
The tedious chime is still ground, plants, and water.  
So, when some John his dull invention racks,  
To rival Boodle's dinners, or. Almack's, 50  
Three uncouth legs of mutton shock our eyes,  
Three roasted geese, three butter'd apple-pies.

Come then, prolific Art, and with thee bring  
The charms that rise from thy exhaustless spring;  
To Richmond come, for see, untutor'd Brown 55  
Destroys those wonders which were once thy own.  
Lo, from his melon-ground the peasant slave  
Has rudely rush'd, and levell'd Merlin's Cave;  
Knock'd down the waxen Wizzard, seiz'd his wand,  
Transform'd to lawn what late was Fairy land; 60

D

And

N O T E.

ments of these may be varied to an incredible degree, yet have they but few striking varieties, the rest being of the nature of *changes rung upon bells*, which, though in reality different, still produce the same uniform kind of *gingling*; the variation being too minute to be easily perceived." "Art must therefore supply the *scantiness of Nature*," &c. &c. page 14. And again, "Our larger works are only a repetition of the small ones, like the *honest Bachelor's feast*, which consisted in nothing but a multiplication of his own dinner; *three legs of mutton and turneps, three roasted geese, and three buttered apple-pies*." Preface, page 7.



And marr'd, with impious hand, each sweet design  
Of Stephen Duck, and good Queen Caroline.

Haste, bid yon livelong Terras re-ascend,

Replace each vista, straighten every bend ;

Shut out the Thames; shall that ignoble thing

65

Approach the presence of great Ocean's King ?

No ! let Barbaric glories feast his eyes,

August Pagodas round his palace rise,

And finish'd Richmond open to his view,

" A work to wonder at, perhaps a" Kew.

70

Nor rest we here, but, at our magic call,

Monkies shall climb our trees, and lizards crawl ;

Huge

## N O T E S.

Verse 67. [No ! let Barbaric glories.] So Milton.

" Where the gorgeous east with richest hand

Showers on her Kings *Barbaric* pearl and gold."

Verse 72. [Monkies shall climb our trees.] " In their lofty woods *serpents* and *lizards* of many beautiful sorts crawl upon the ground. Innumerable *monkies*, *cats*, and *parrots* clamber upon the trees." Page 40. " In their lakes are many *islands*, some small, some large, amongst which are often seen stalking along, *the elephant*, the rhinoceros, the dromedary, ostrich, and the giant baboon." page 66. " They keep in their enchanted scenes, a surprizing variety of monstrous birds, reptiles and animals, which are tamed by art, and guarded by enormous *dogs of Tibet* and *African giants*, in the habits of magicians."



Huge dogs of Tibet bark in yonder grove,  
 Here parrots prate, there cats make cruel love ;  
 In some fair island will we turn to grafs 75  
 (With the Queen's leave) her elephant and afs.  
 Giants from Africa fhall guard the glades,  
 Where his our fnakes, where fport our Tartar maids ;  
 Or, wanting thefe, from Charlotte Hayes we bring,  
 Damfels alike adroit to fport and fting. 80  
 Now to our lawns of dalliance and delight,  
 Join we the groves of horror and affright ;  
 This to atchieve no foreign aids we try,  
 Thy gibbets, Bagshot ! fhall our wants fupply ;  
 Hounflow, whose heath fublimer terror fills, 85  
 Shall with her gibbets lend her powder mills.

Here

## N O T E S.

cians." Page 42. " Sometimes in this romantic excursion, the paffenger finds himfelf in extenfive recefles, furrounded with arbours of jeffamine, vine, and rofes ; where beautiful *Tartarean damfels*, in loofe transparent robes that flutter in the air, prefent him with rich wines, &c. and invite him to tafte the fweets of retirement, on Perfian carpets, and beds of Camufathkin down." Page 40.

Verfe 84. [Thy gibbets, Bagshot.] " Their fcenes of terror are compofed of gloomy woods, &c. *gibbets*, croffes, wheels, and the whole apparatus of torture are feen from



Here too, O King of Vengeance, in thy fane,  
 Tremendous Wilkes shall rattle his gold chain ;  
 And round that fane on many a Tyburn tree,  
 Hang fragments dire of Newgate-history ; 90  
 On this shall H\*ll\*d's dying speech be read,  
 Here B—te's confession, and his wooden head ;

While

#### N O T E S.

from the roads. Here too they conceal in cavities, on the summits of the highest mountains, foundaries, lime-kilns, and glass works, which send forth large volumes of flame, and continued columns of thick smoke, that give to these mountains the appearance of Volcanos." Page 37. " Here the passenger from time to time, is surprized with repeated shocks of electrical impulse ; the earth trembles under him by the power of confined air," &c. Page 39. Now to produce both these effects, viz. the appearance of volcanos and earthquakes, we have here substituted the occasional explosion of a *powder-mill*, which (if there be not too much simplicity in the contrivance) it is apprehended will at once answer all the purposes of *lime-kilns*, and *electrical machines*, and imitate *thunder*, and the *explosion of cannon* into the bargain. Vide page 40.

Verse 87. [Here too, O King of Vengeance, &c.] " In the most dismal recesses of the woods, are temples dedicated to the *King of Vengeance*, near which are placed pillars of stone, with *pathetic descriptions of tragical events* ; and many acts of cruelty perpetrated there by *outlaws and robbers*." Page 37.

Verse 88. [Tremendous Wilkes.] This was written while Mr. Wilkes was Sheriff of London, and when it was to be feared he would rattle his chain a year longer as Lord Mayor.



While all the minor plunderers of the age  
 (Too numerous far for this contracted page)  
 The R\*g\*ys, Mungos, B\*ds\*ws there, 95  
 In straw-stufft effigy, shall kick the air.  
 But say, ye powers, who come when Fancy calls,  
 Where shall our mimic London rear her walls?  
 That Eastern feature, Art must next produce,  
 Tho' not for present yet for future use; 100  
 Our sons some slave of greatness may behold,  
 Cast in the genuine Asiatic mould:

E

Who

## N O T E.

Verse 98. [Where shall our mimic London, &c.] “ There is likewise in the same garden, viz. Yven-Ming-Yven, near Pekin, *a fortified town*, with its port, streets, public squares, temples, markets, shops, and tribunals of justice; in short, with every thing that is at Pekin, only on a smaller scale.”

“ In this town the Emperors of China, who are too much *the slaves of their greatness* to appear in public, and their women, who are excluded from it by custom, are frequently diverted with the hurry and bustle of the capital, which is there represented, several times in the year, by the eunuchs of the palace.” Page 32.



Who of three realms shall condescend to know  
 No more than he can spy from Windsor's brow;  
 For Him that blessing of a better time, 105  
 The Muse shall deal awhile in brick and lime;  
 Surpass the bold ΑΔΕΛΦΙ in design,  
 And o'er the Thames fling one stupendous line  
 Of marble arches, in a bridge, that cuts  
 From Richmond Ferry slant to Brentford Butts. 110  
 Brentford with London's charms will we adorn;  
 Brentford, the bishoprick of Parson Horne.  
 There at one glance, the royal eye shall meet  
 Each varied beauty of St. James's Street;  
 Stout T\*lb\*t there shall ply with hackney chair, 115  
 And Patriot Betty fix her fruit-shop there.

Like

## N O T E S.

Verse 109. [Of marble arches.] See Sir William's enormous account of Chinese *Bridges*, too long to be here inserted. Vide page 53.

Verse 115. [Stout T\*\*t, &c.] "Some of these eunuchs personate porters." Page 32.

Verse 116. [And Patriot Betty.] "Fruits and all sorts of refreshments are cried about the streets in this mock city." Page 33.



Like distant thunder, now the coach of state  
 Rolls o'er the bridge, that groans beneath its weight.  
 The Court have crost the stream; the sports begin;  
 Now N\*\*l preaches of rebellion's fin: 120  
 And as the powers of his strong pathos rise,  
 Lo, brazen tears fall from Sir Fl\*\*r's eyes.  
 While skulking round the pews, that babe of grace,  
 Who ne'er before at sermon shew'd his face,  
 See Jemmy Twitcher shambles; stop! stop thief! 125  
 He's stol'n the E\* of D\*nb\*h's handkerchief.  
 Let B\*rr\*t\*n arrest him in mock fury,  
 And M\*\*d hang the knave without a jury.

But

## N O T E S.

Verse 122. [Lo, brazen tears, &c.]

Drew *iron* tears down Pluto's cheek. Milton.

Verse 125. [See Jemmy Twitcher shambles.] "Neither are thieves, pickpockets, and sharpers forgot in these festivals; that noble profession is usually allotted to a good number of the most dexterous eunuchs." Vide, *ibid*.

Verse 127. [Let B\*\*\*n.] "The watch seizes on the culprit." Vide, *ibid*.

Verse 128 [And M\*\*d, &c.] "He is conveyed before the Judge, and sometimes severely bastinadoed." *Ibid*.



But hark the voice of battle shouts from far,  
 The Jews and Macaroni's are at war : 130  
 The Jews prevail, and, thund'ring from the stocks,  
 They seize, they bind, they circumcise C\*s F\*.  
 Fair Schw\*\*\*n smiles the sport to see,  
 And all the Maids of Honour cry Te! He!  
 Be these the rural pastimes that attend 135  
 Great B\*nsfw\*k's leisure: these shall best unbend  
 His royal mind, whene'er, from state withdraw'n,  
 He treads the velvet of his Richmond lawn;  
 These shall prolong his Asiatic dream,  
 Tho' Europe's balance trembles on it's beam. 140  
 And

## N O T E.

Verse 129. [But hark, &c.] "Quarrels happen—battles ensue." Ibid.

Verse 132. [Circumcise C\*s F\*.] "Every liberty is permitted, there is no distinction of persons." Ibid.

Verse 134. [And all the Maids of Honour, &c.] "This is done to divert his Imperial Majesty, and the ladies of his train." Vide, *ibid.*



And thou, Sir William ! while thy plastic hand  
Creates each wonder, which thy Bard has plann'd,  
While, as thy art commands, obsequious rise  
Whate'er can please, or frighten, or surprize,  
O ! let that Bard his Knight's protection claim,  
And share, like faithful Sancho, Quixote's fame.

145

F I N I S.



And thou, Sir William! while thy plaid-hand  
Cries each word, which thy hand has plan'd,  
While, as thy art commands, obsequious life  
Whistles, or pleads, or fights, or surplices,  
O! let that hand his Knight's protection claim,  
And there, like old Sir Sancha, Quixote's dam,

143

F I N I S